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helplessness; Benes capitulated before Gottwald's ultimatum. It was the end of the Putsch which Hubert Ripka later described as a 'prefabricated revolution'. On March 9[1] Jean Masaryk, Minister of Foreign Affairs, wrote a personal letter to Stalin, in which he denounced the intervention of Zorine, the Soviet Ambassador, in the events of February: 'When a time of mortal danger for the country, and for all Slavs, comes, you will have in Prague nothing but a Government hated by the country, despised by the *élite*, and relying entirely on the bayonets of its police organisations'. The next day Masaryk committed suicide: contradictory versions of his death were circulated, although the above-mentioned letter had made clear his intention of ending his life.

Thus the inspirer of two Czech liberations, heir to the thought of Thomas Masaryk, disappeared in shameful oblivion; the commentaries in the Communist press, in which he was later accused of having betrayed the interests of the country, lead us to wonder whether his inglorious end did not save him from an even more tragic fate. Posterity will pronounce a mixed judgment on his political achievement. His tomb might fittingly have been engraved with this epitaph, taken from one of his books (*Whither the Slavs?*): 'The existence and the prosperity of all the Slav States is inseparably bound up with a régime of true democracy, that is to say, a régime in which the elementary principles of individual liberty, liberty of conviction, liberty of religion, liberty of political expression and liberty of public opinion, are guaranteed and fully respected'.

As for Benes, whose authority was henceforth without scope, on June 7, 'for health reasons', he resigned his presidential office, which he had held since June 19, 1946, in a message by which he invited his fellow-citizens 'to encourage liberty and consciously enjoy it'. He died a few months later, on September 3, 1948.

The events of February were to be mentioned at the United Nations Security Council, with a view to appointing a commission of inquiry—which was opposed by a Soviet veto (May 24).

On March 9, 1948, was voted the Constitution which made Czechoslovakia a 'democratic peoples' republic'. It instituted a Single House system, and proclaimed the equality of Czechs and Slovaks: the republic was to be a bi-national State. Unlike

1 [1948 - Analyst]